

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCCT-02 CU-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01

SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 NIC-01 OPR-02 DRC-01 /107 W

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P 101545Z SEP 74

FM AMCONSUL MEDELLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 890

INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

AMCONSUL CALI

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE MEDELLIN 0278

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CO, PINS

SUBJECT: STUDENT DEMONSTRATION DISRUPTS DOWNTOWN MEDELLIN

1. AT APPROXIMATELY SEVEN O'CLOCK PM STEP 9 THE VICE CONSUL OBSERVED A DEMONSTRATION OF AT LEAST ONE THOUSAND VOCIFEROUS STUDENTS. THE STUDENT GROUP MARCHED DOWN BOLIVAR, CARRYING UNIDENTIFIABLE PLACARDS, CHANTED SLOGANS AND CONGREGATED IN FRONT OF THE ANTIOQUIAN GOVERNOR'S OFFICE.

2. AT THIS POINT, THEY SAT DOWN IN THE STREET THUS BLOCKING RUSH HOUR TRAFFIC. ALTHOUGH THE STUDENTS APPEARED TO HAVE NO LEADERS, THEY CHANTED MORE SLOGANS WHILE MOTORISTS ANGRILY BLASTED THEIR HORNS. THIS NOISY SCENARIO LASTED ABOUT FIVE MINUTES. IT WAS INTERRUPTED BY THE ARRIVAL OF APPROXIMATELY FORTY RIOT POLICE. THE STUDENTS DISPERSED HASTILY AS THE POLICE CHARGED INTO THE CROWD. WITHIN THIRTY SECONDS THE GROUP WAS SCATTERED AND A SMALL NUMBER OF DEMONSTRATORS APPREHENDED. DURING THE DISPERSAL ACTION, SEVERAL STORE WINDOWS WERE BROKEN AND A FEW DEMONSTRATORS APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN INJURED.

3. THE MEDELLIN PRESS REPORTED THE FOLLOWING DAY THAT 24 STUDENTS WERE ARRESTED; NO ESTIMATE WAS MADE OF THE NUMBER

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OF STUDENTS INJURED.

4. COMMENT: THE DEMONSTRATION ENDING IN VIOLENCE WAS THE LATEST MANIFESTATION OF CONTINUING UPHEAVAL AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ANTIOQUIA. THE CURRENT FOCUS OF PROFESSOR AND STUDENT DISCONTENT IS THE "TEACHING STATUTE", I.E. A CODE OF RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR PROFESSORS RAMMED THROUGH BY UNIVERSITY AUTHORITIES DURING LAST YEAR'S STATE OF SIEGE AND OPPOSED BY UNIVERSITY TEACHERS EVER SINCE. EFFORTS TO NEGOTIATE REVISIONS OF THE TEACHING STATUTE HAVE REPEATEDLY FAILED: AT HEART IS THE UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION'S DETERMINATION TO RETAIN FIRM CONTROL OVER THE UNIVERSITY AND THE PROFESSORS. THE PROFESSORS HAVE NOW CALLED AN INDEFINITE STRIKE, AND YESTERDAY'S STUDENT DEMONSTRATION WAS IN SUPPORT OF THE PROFESSORS. THE CONSULATE EXPECTS ADDITIONAL DISTURBANCES, PARTICULARLY SEPTEMBER 11, THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE FALL AND DEATH OKPALLENDE. COOPER

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